FLORA;

OR,

HOB IN THE WELL.

A

FARCE.

Taken from the

MANAGER'S BOOK,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXXVII.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Hob,	—	Mr. RYDER.
Friendly,	—	Mr. DAVIES.
Sir Thomas Testy,	—	Mr. FEARON.
Dick,	—	Mr. BROWN.
Old Hob,	—	Mr. BOOTH.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Flora,	—	Mrs. MARTYR.
Hob's Mother,	—	Mrs. PITT.
Betty,	—	Miss STUART.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Flora *and* Betty *discovered.*

Flora. BETTY——

Bet. Madam.

Flo. It's a ſad life I lead here.

Bet. Life indeed, Madam, is a ſad thing any where to lovers that are uncoupled.

Flo. Wer't thou ever in love, *Betty?*

Bet. O moſt cruelly, Madam; but the man I lov'd had another more darling miſtreſs—call'd *Claret*—for whoſe ſweet ſociety I was forſaken.

Flo. And how do you find yourſelf now?

Bet. As moſt folks are, after the loſs of an old lover.

Flo. How's that?

Bet. Ready for a new one.

Flo. Wou'd I were of thy humour——But my ſilly heart's ſo ſet upon Mr. *Friendly*, that all mankind beſide are no more than my own ſex to me.

Bet. Then you muſt have him, madam, or you'll go into a conſumption——

Flo. Ay, but how ſhall I come at him, *Betty?*

Bet. Why run a riſque, madam.

Flo. What riſque?

Bet. Run away with him.

Flo. Pſha! how is that poſſible! when my uncle locks me up as if I were his only bottle of brandy?

Bet. You know, madam, I have ſometimes the keys of both in my keeping——and if you pleaſe to uncork your conſcience, I'll undertake, in eight and forty hours, Mr. *Friendly* ſhall have at leaſt half a dozen godowns of you.

Flo. Ah, *Betty!* I'm afraid you flatter me.

Bet. Nay, madam, you are as good a judge of that as I; for you muſt own, he has a very promiſing perſon.

Flo. Pſha! I don't think of his perſon.

Bet. If any other woman thought half ſo much of it, you wou'd pull her commode for her.

Flo. Pooh! but I mean I am afraid you are not ſincere in your advice, and that if I ſhou'd truſt you with

any deſign of that nature, you wou'd diſcover it to my uncle.

Bet. Ah! but if I were to live with you, and have my wages rais'd, after you are married—I know whoſe ſuſpicion does me a great deal of wrong.

Flo. Swear then to be true, and I will truſt you. But, dear Betty, be out of the faſhion for once, and keep your oath; I'll tell you why I ſo earneſtly entreat you.

Flo. Cuſtom prevailing ſo long 'mongſt the great,
Makes oaths eaſy potions to ſleep on,
Which many (on gaining good places) repeat,
Without e'er deſigning to keep one.
For an oath's ſeldom kept as a virgin's fair fame;
A lover's fond vows, or a prelate's good name;
A lawyer to truth; a ſtateſman from blame;
Or a patriot heart in a courtier.

Bet. Here then, I ſwear, by all my hopes and perquiſites; by the ſweet profits of my place in view, and double wages in reverſion; by your lac'd ſhoes too big, and thoſe too little; by the ſilk grown you'll give me at your wedding; by all your manteus, heads, hoops, ſhort hoods and cloaks, and as I hope your laſt blue atlas never will be worn again; I ſwear——

Flo. That you will inviolably keep my ſecrets, and aſſiſt me to your utmoſt, in running away with Mr. Friendly,

Bet. I ſwear.

Flo. Then I will truſt you; and when I'm married, Betty, every article of your oath ſhall be made good to you—Look here then, here's a letter I had juſt written to Mr. Friendly, wherein I've promis'd, at twelve o'clock to night, to be upon the mount in the garden; and if he will take care to meet me on t'other ſide, and ſet a ladder againſt the wall, I'll toſs over my bandbox, venture catching cold in the dew, and take my fortune with him.

Bet. Here's metal in the propoſal, madam—Let's ſee the letter, he ſhall have it in a quarter of an hour, tho' I carry it myſelf.

Flo. But I won't venture neither, unleſs his anſwer

tells he'll be ready—So, dear Betty, be careful, I have no mortal to truſt but thee.

Bet. And no mortal fitter to be truſted. [*Exit.*

Flo. So, now my heart's at eaſe——I find my reſolution's good at the bottom; and ſince I have ſet my head upon running away, 'tis not my old uncle, nor the garden-wall, ſhall ſtop me, tho' he were as wiſe as a biſhop, and the wall as high as a church-ſteeple. *Enter Sir* Tho. Teſty.

Sir *Tho.* How now! Mrs. Irreverence! Am I ſuch a hobgoblin, that you ſtart at the ſight of me?

Flo. Sir, I did not think any harm; but when you come upon one unawares——

Sir *Tho.* Unawares! What, I ſurpriz'd you then? Your head was full of other matters, which, I ſuppoſe, that cloſe committee of the fleſh and the devil have abſolutely reſolv'd to be the fundamentals of your conſtitution.

Flo. Lord! Sir, how ſtrangely you talk to one.

Sir *Tho.* Talk! you malapert; why who ſhou'd talk to you but I? Who am I? Huſſy! Who am I?

Flo. You are my uncle by relation, my guardian by my father's will, and my jailor againſt mine.

Sir *Tho.* Then while you are my priſoner, huſſy, how dare you take ſuch liberty!

Flo. Becauſe liberty, Sir, is the ſweeteſt thing a priſoner can take.

Sir *Tho.* Don't you think in your conſcience now, miſtreſs, you deſerve to be lock'd up?

Flo. I think in my conſcience, you ought to let me marry; ſince I've a mind to't.

Sir *Tho.* Provoking! Dare you own this to my face?

Flo. Why, Sir, is't a fault? You have kept me in priſon for theſe ten months, and I did not know but my confeſſing might deſerve a little of your mercy.

Sir *Tho.* Aſtoniſhing! The devil has hardened you, huſſy! you are a fright! Go, go, to your chamber, people will ſtare at you; I would not have you ſeen abroad in this condition for——O Lord! Your brain's turn'd! You ſhall bleed, miſtreſs. I'll have your room darken'd: water-gruel, diſcipline and water-gruel! ye Gods!

Flo. Look'e, uncle, I find you have a mind to drive me to a hard bargain; therefore to let you see that I am no hagler, I'll make you an offer which shall fairly come up to the most you can make of me—as thus—

Sir *Tho.* What new distraction hast thou got in thy head now?

Flo. Hear me: You know I have 8000l. to my fortune; and that by my father's will, you are to be allow'd the whole interest of it, till I am either married or of age, to reimburse your expences in maintaining me; which said maintenance, by a modest computation, may stand you in—Let me see—About seven or eight pounds a year (for I've had no cloaths but my mother's)—Now, Sir, if you'll immediately give me the liberty of marrying the man I have a mind to, I'll engage he shall consent to the throwing of my fortune into the public funds, the minute you throw me into his arms. So you shall have the use of my pence till I am of age, as a premium for advancing to him the use of my person.

Sir *Tho.* Hum! The girl begins to talk sensibly—— But 'tis not yet proper to understand her—Look'e, child, when you have persuaded your lover to make the same proposal under his hand, I shall then believe you are equally mad to come at one another—— In the mean time, let me advise you to your chamber, from whence I will allow you the lovely prospect of the garden. [*Exit.*

Flo. You may chance to fret for this, my very wise uncle. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter Friendly *and* Servant.

Friend. What a watchful old rogue is this?

Servant. A very dragon, Sir.

Friend. To use a young creature so unmercifully.

Servant. Nay, Sir, so uncivilly.

Friend. How, sirrah?

Servant. To force her to such extremities, to make her straddle over a great wall, and risque her neck down a ladder at midnight, when he ought to lend her his hand into a coach and six out of his great gate at noon day to come to you, Sir. But the rascal has no breeding!

Friend. By Mercury, I'll be even with him!

Serv. You have reaſon, Sir, for tho' I ſay it——

Friend. That ſhou'd not ſay it.

Serv. She is a lovely piece of temptation, Sir.

Friend. What's o'clock, ſirrah?

Serv. By the moon's riſing, I believe it may be about, about, a—paſt ten.

Friend. Then, ſirrah, about paſt twelve—

Serv. You'll have one of her blue ſilk ſtockings ſtraddling over the wall, Sir—

At paſt twelve o'clock, and a fine ſummer's morning,
When all in the village ſleep pleaſantly,
Cynthia's *bright beams, all nature adorning,*
Shall guide my ſwift ſteps to my lovely ſhe.
Then my Flora, *fraught with kind wiſhes,*
I'll fold in my arms, with amorous kiſſes,
Which ſerve as preludes to more ſolid bliſſes—
Soon as the vican has made us one.

Friend. But where's the country fellow you promis'd ſhould carry my anſwer to her letter?

Serv. Who, Hob, Sir? Here he is; and if any ſuſpects his face for a pimp's, I have no ſkill in the ſcience, Sir. *Enter* Hob.

Friend. Well, Hob, can'ſt thou carry this letter to Sir Thomas Teſty's houſe for me?

Hob. Yes, Zir, yes.

Friend. Do ſo, and give it to madam Flora; but take care nobody ſees you deliver it.

Hob. Yes, Zir—but muſt I carry it to night?—'Tis main dark.

Friend. You muſt go immediately.

Hob. I hope, Zir, there's no difference between you and Zir Tomas.

Friend. Why do'ſt hope ſo?

Hob. Why truly, Zir, I do hear there be; and therefore I don't care to meddle or make between friends; for 'tis but an unthankful office; and you know Zir Tomas is very cruſty, and if he do's but zuſpect that I ſhau'd conzarn myzel, may hap he may take the law of me; and you knaw, Zir, that law is a vrightful thing.

The terrible law, when it faſtens its paw,
On a poor man, it gripes 'till he's undone;
And what I am doing, may turn to my ruin,
Tho' rich as the Lord Mayor of London.

Therefore I'll be wary, what meſſage I carry,
Unleſs we firſt make a zure bargain;
I will be dempnify'd, thoroughly zatisfy'd
That ch'am ſhan't zuffer a warding.

Friend. Piſh, the law ſhall never trouble thee; I'll ſecure thee from any harm.

Hob. Very well, Zir, very well, that's as much as I can deſire: But pray don't take unkindly what I zay, for you know no man is willing to bring himſel into a primunire if he con help it.

Friend. No, no—Prithee be gone.

Hob. I will, Zir, I will,—for—for—Pray, Zir, be pleas'd to read the zubſcription for me.

Friend. S'Death, how I am tortur'd with this fooliſh fellow, and I can ſend nobody elſe without being ſuſpected—Don't trouble thyſelf with the ſuperſcription, but deliver it as I bid thee.

Hob. Very good, Zir, very good—'Tis main dark—Wou'd it not do as well, Zir, if I ſhould carry it in the morning? had rather go in the morning.

Friend. Why ſo?

Hob. Why, truly, Zir, I'll tell you: at the lower end of Zir Tomas's orchard, one of our poor neighbour's being in a diſparaging condition, has gone and hang'd himzel—Now there is zome do zay that he walks by night in zeveral zorts of ſhapes.

Friend. What, and ſo you are afraid, are you?

Hob. No, indeed, Sir, ch'am not afraid—I thank marcy, I defy the devil and all his works.

Friend. A pox on thee then, get thee gone.

Hob. Tho' I muſt tell you, I have a great concait he will appear to me,—vor you muſt knaw, to morrow the crowner's queſt is to zit upon him, whereof, d'ye zee, I'm to be one; and who knows but he may have zomething upon his ſpirits that may make him break his mind to me; and if zo, let me tell you, I'm afraid it will make a bad day for zomebody—vor if Zir Tomas had kept his fences whole, mayhap this man had ne'er been tempted to ha' gone into his ground to ha' hanged himzel. But be that as it will,

I'll

I'll do your buſineſs vor you; therefore pray take you no care, Zir ——

Friend. Prithee about it then.

Hob. Ay, ay, I'll warrant you, don't trouble your zel no vurder—vor if I zay I'll do't, I'll do't, that's my humour. Did not maiſter Dick recommend me to you, maiſter Friendly.

Friend. Yes, what then!

Hob. Ay, ay, he knew very well what he was about—there is ſome of our boys here in our town, that would ſtand prating and prating half an hour, and not do your buſineſs; but I'm a mon that makes few words, and ſo—

Friend. Get thee gone, [*Exeunt.*

Enter Sir Thomas *and* Servants.

Sir *Tho.* 'Twill be a hard matter to ſink any of the principal, indeed; ſo that cou'd the girl make good the propoſal, I wou'd not care how ſoon ſhe were kiſs'd black in the face; but ſhould I give her the leaſt liberty upon't, 'tis poſſible when ſhe has made uſe on't, her conſcience might deſire to be off. And I dare ſwear her lover will ſpare neither care nor coſt to come at her without my conſent; and gold in particular has a prevailing influence in a love affair, therefore I muſt watch my ward myſelf—ſervants may be corrupted. D'ye hear, raſcals, look ſharp, for this is the uſual hour that your ſoft ſighing rogues run a caterwauling.

Serv. Sir! Sir! yonder's ſomebody with a light coming down the field.

Sir *Tho.* Stand ſtill then, and obſerve.

Enter Hob *whiſtling.*

Hob. Zo, this is the houſe—now let me zee—how ſhall I go about to do this zame buſineſs—If that old fox, Zir Tomas, ſhou'd ſpy me, he'd maul me vor zartain—But let me alone, I'll be cunning enough vor him, I'll warrant ye—If he zees me, he muſt have more eyes than two.——Hold, hold, now let me zee vor this ſame letter—O, here it is—For Madam Flo——Flo——Madam Flora.

Sir *Tho.* Where are you carrying this letter, friend?

[*Sir* Tho. *ſnatching it.*

Hob.

Hob. Letter, Zir?

Sir *Tho.* Letter, Sir! ay letter, Sir! who did you bring it from?

Hob. Bring it vrom, Zir! I brought it vrom nobody, not I.

Sir *Tho.* How came you by it?

Hob. Buy it, Zir, I did not buy it; why I vound it in my pocket, Zir.

Sir *Tho.* Found it in your pocket—What did it grow there then, ha! Where are you going with it?

Hob. Going with it, Zir? I dan't knaw where cha'm going with it, not I.

Sir *Tho.* What do you do here at this time o'night?

Hob. I can't tell what I do here, not I—I'll go home, Zir, if you pleaſe—I wiſh you a good night.

Sir *Tho.* Hold, hold, a little, friend, let me reward you firſt for bringing it, however.

Hob. Not a varthing, Zir, indeed, I muſt not take one varthing, for Maiſter Friendly charg'd me to th' contrary; therefore pray dan't offer it.

Sir *Tho.* O, did he ſo, but ſomething I will give you however; pray take that, and that, ſirrah [*Beats him.*

Hob. O Lard! O Lard! what do you ſtrik'n vor? avore Gad I'll take the law of you, zee an I don't—what do you go to murder me?

Sir *Tho.* I'll law you, you rogue——are you their letter carrier? There's more for you, ſirrah.

Hob. Bear witneſs, bear witneſs, ze an you don't pay for this! O Lard! O Lard!

Sir *Tho.* Here, ſirrahs, lay hold of him, till I examine the letter. Let's ſee—To Mrs. Flora—right. *The propoſal you mention, in caſe of extremity, will certainly do; but it will be a much pleaſanter piece of juſtice to bite him for his barbarity.* (A ſon of a whore, he means me to be ſure.) *The ladder and all things ſhall be ready exactly at twelve to night.* (Oons!) *If you have any thing farther of moment, this fellow is honeſt, and will convey it ſafe to your eternal lover,*

Tom. Friendly.

Yes, yes, I find he is honeſt, with a pox to him, and I'll reward him accordingly—Here, deſire that honeſt gentleman to walk down to the bottom of that well—

And let him ſtay there till I call for him.

Hob. I con't do it, as I hope to be zav'd I con't; pray vorbear, and don't murder an innocent man.

[*Falls on his knees.*

I never 'till now was conzarned in ſtrife,
Have mercy Sir Tomas, *and ſpare poor* Hob's *life,*
And give me my vreedom, as I had bevore——
I'll be a good boy, and I'll do zo no more:
Indeed I won't——

Sir *Tho.* In with him, I ſay——

Hob. O Lard! maiſter Jonathan, I vorewarn you, dan't ye be conzarn'd in this: conzider what you do.

Sir *Tho.* Oons! in with him.

Hob. You are all principals, there are no 'compliſhes in murder. Help! Murder! [*They put him down.*

SCENE III. *A Chamber.*

Enter Flora.

Flo. I heard a ſtrange noiſe without; I wiſh things go as they ſhou'd—My heart beats, as if Mr. What dy'e call 'em were in my arms.——Well, this love's a terrible thing—Wou'd the worſt on't were over, I'm afraid I ſhall never be able to go thro' with it—I am ſure here's an odd buſtle about it. How now! [*Enter* Bet.

Bet. Undone! undone! Madam; your uncle has intercepted Mr. Friendly's letter in anſwer to your's, and all your deſign's diſcovered: he raves and tears like a mad-man, and in his paſſion has thrown the poor fellow that brought it into the great well—and ſwears if any body offers to help him out, without his order, he'll throw them in after him.

Flo. Well, if I am here alive, I thought it wou'd come to nothing—It vexes the heart of me.

Bet. But come, Madam, don't be wholly diſcouraged; for John tells me, 'tis a hundred to one but the fellow's drown'd.

Flo. Pſha! I wiſh my uncle was drown'd in his room.

Bet. No, Madam, but he'll be hang'd, and that's as well.

Flo. Do you really think ſo?

Bet. Poz.

Flo. Then I'll marry in ſpite of his teeth.

Bet. Right, when he is in one nooſe, you may ſlip into t'other.

Flo. Dear Betty, ſtep out and ſee how 'tis with the fellow, for I'm in a thouſand frights; and if things are—you know how,—aſk when the aſſizes begin. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *The Well.*

Enter Old Hob *and his Wife.*

O. *Hob.* Come, wife, never trouble thy zelf, a wull go a rawging ſometimes, and there's an end on't, He wull come home again I warrant 'un.

Wife. I think o'my conſcience it's no great matter whether he does or no—A baſe raugue, to be out of the way at ſuch a buſy time as thick is; The zun has been up this hour and quarter, and that grauceleſs boy, I warrant, has not beena bed yet; prithee, huſband, ſtep and zee, a'n he be'nt zotting at the Park-gate, and I'll draw th' water in the mean time.

O. *Hob.* Do you then. *Exit.*

Wife. This boy's a the plague of my life, I think—'twere more than time the gammon had been boiled by now. And now the volk will come to the wake bevore he be cold—and then it waun't be vit to be eaten—a jackanapes! when I bid 'en, and beg 'en, and prayed 'en to ſtay, and he would go—And yet, notwithſtanding all I have zaid, cou'd I lay eyes on him, I ſhou'd forget his roguery, and vorgiv'n.

Here have I been blaming the poor boy for not minding his buſineſs, and at the ſame time neglect my own: I muſt haſte to wind up the bucket, or I ſhall have huſband back bevore I've drawn a drop of water.

[*Goes to the well and ſings, Did you not hear*, &c. Lud, Lud, 'tis main heavy—Heyday—I believe old Nick's in the bottom o'the bucket, for my part. [Hob *cries out.*] Oh, a Ghoſt! a Ghoſt!

[Hob *appears in the bucket, and ſhe lets the rope go, and he ſinks again.*

Enter Old Hob.

O. *Hob.* Heyday! what's the matter with a murrain ty'e, is the woman in her tantrums?

Wife. A ghoſt! a ghoſt!——*Hob*'s ghoſt in the well——Ah——

O. *Hob.*

O. *Hob.* The woman's turn'd vool, I think—let me zee, if the devil be in the well, I'll vetch 'en out on't—here's a rout indeed—Wauns! I think the devil be in the bucket—But now I have got 'en half way, I'll knaw what zort of a devil 'tis, and if he ben't a zivil one, I'll zouze 'en and zop 'en in the bottom agen.

Y. *Hob.* Ah! hau'd vaſt, vather, 'tis I! 'tis I!

Wife. Ah! 'tis there agen.

O. *Hob.* Hau'd your peace, I zay, the devil can't get in a word for you; I think—who's there? *Hob?*

Y. *Hob.* Ay, vor love's zake pull away, vather.

O. *Hob.* Prithee lend's thy hond, wife—Bleſs my eyes! 'tis *Hob* indeed—what in the name of wonder doſt thou here, lad?

Y. *Hob.* Ah! dan't 'e aſk queſtions now, vather—get me home—Zir *Tomas* has don't; but if there be law in all the king's kingdom, I'll capias 'en vor zartain. I dan't knaw but it may prove the death of me; I'll zue him next hizi-prizis an't coſt me vorty ſhillings. I'll zue him, come on't what will—zee if I don't make him pay vor't.

Wife. *Oh! my poor boy.*
O. Hob. *His looks are ſtark wild!*
Wife. *Con'd Sir* Thomas *deſtroy*
O. Hob. *So hopeful a child!*
Y. Hob. *I'll revenge if I con,*
Wife. *Ah! talk ſo no more.*
O. Hob. *He's a great man,*
O. Hob *and* Wife. *And we are but poor.*
Y. Hob. *All you do zay can zignify nothing.*
I'll capias 'en vor't let it coſt what it will.
Wife. *Go to bed, boy, whilſt I get thee dry cloathing.*
O. Hob. *Think thou art taught to return good for ill?*
Y. Hob. *I'll indict 'en i'th' crown,*
And bind o'er to the ſeſſion,
Tho'ſ I zell my heifer, and the auld mare,
Udsblead I'd hang 'en or drown 'en;
O. Hob. ——— *Forbear zuch expreſſions—*

Wife. *Prithee forgive, and be not severe.*

Y. Hob. *I'll never forgive, and will be severe.*

Wife. Oh, poor *Hob!* come along, child, and I'll get thee a little sugar-sops to comfort thy bowels.

Hob. Oh, mother! mother?

Hob's mother. What dost say, boy?

Hob. Don't you remember what my father us'd to say of me?

Mother. What, my dear?

Hob. He said I was too pratty a boy to live long.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Chamber.*

Enter Sir Thomas *and* Servant.

Sir *Tho.* JOHN, what's become of the fellow that fell into the well last night? has any body taken care of him?

Serv. No, Sir, your worship said he should lie there 'till your worship was pleased to call for him—

Sir *Tho.* Oons, sirrah, you have not drown'd the fellow, have you?

Serv. Who, I drown him, Sir, nay, nay, hau'd yee, I am but a servant, and 'twas you bade me; an any mischief shou'd come on't, 'tis you must answer it—flesh! what have I to do with it?

Sir *Tho.* You impudent rogue! wou'd you put your villainies upon me? Did not I see you collar him, did not you lay violent hands upon him, sirrah, and am not I a witness against you?

Serv. Lard! lard! at this rate, a man had as good be a galley-slave, as a servant—If one don't do as one's bid, one's head's broke; and if one does, one's to be hang'd for't: but come what will, the gallows will hold two, that's the best on't.

Sir *Tho.* He says true, faith—Well, well, keep your own counsel, sirrah, and I'll see what I can do to save you.

Serv. Nay, nay, as for that, do you see, do as you see cause—let it go thick way, or let it go thack way, 'tis all a case to me, go which way it will, one good turn will require another.

Sir

Sir *Tho.* Hold your peace, ſirrah—and be gone—[*Exit Servant.*] This ſurly dog is not to be frighted, I ſee; I muſt (as is cuſtomary with a man in power) protect this fellow in his roguery for my own ſake.

Enter Servant *with a letter.*

Serv. Sir, here's a letter for you.

Sir *Tho.* Who brought it?

Serv. Mr. Friendly's man, Sir.

Sir *Tho.* Let's ſee! (*Reads*)

Sir, your niece informs me, that ſhe has made you a propoſal concerning our marriage, which I am willing to ratify whenever you will pleaſe to do me the honour of a meeting. Yours.

Humph! that meeting may be to meet with my niece, for aught I know—I muſt have the particulars under his hand, before I ſeem to underſtand him: therefore, that I don't underſtand him, ſhall be my anſwer.—— In the mean time I'll put on a ſmoother look to the girl, and ſhew her a little of the country diverſion from the mount in the garden; and if they are in earneſt, that good humour will work her to work him up to my price——Bid the fellow ſtay till I write him an anſwer.

SCENE II. *The Wood and Garden-wall.*

Enter Old Hob *and Wife.*

Wife. Come, huſband, now the boy has got on his dry clothes, let him be ſtirring a bit—Come, come, make haſte, the town will be vul of volk, bevore we ſhall get vitted.

O. *Hob.* Don't trouble thy zelf, wife, every thing within doors is ready, and there is nothing wanting but the zign to be put up; and look'ye, that ſhall be done preſent——Hob! Hob!

Hob within. What zay you, vather?

O. *Hob.* Tap the ale, quick, quick.

Hob within. Ay, ay, vather.

O. *Hob.* There—now he that will drink good ale, let him come to the zign of the Pot-Lid—Come, wife, let's to our buſineſs within. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Friendly *diſguiſed*, Servant, *and* Country People.

Friend. If this diſguiſe does not conceal me——

Serv. You'll then be out of countenance to no pur-

poſe, Sir—But pray, Sir, what do you propoſe by turning ballad-ſinger?

Friend. I do propoſe that Flora ſhall know me by my voice, and that conſequently her wits will ſoon be at work to come at me.

Serv. Well, Sir, but of what uſe can I be? for I can no more ſing, than I can faſt.

Friend. But you can help to draw other gaping fools about me.

Serv. There's ſome ſenſe in that indeed, Sir.

Enter Sir Thomas, Flora, *and* Betty.

Sir *Tho.* Come, niece, if you muſt ſee the paſtime, you may have as fair a proſpect of it here, as in the crowd.

Flora. I like it very well here, Sir.

Friend. Well, ho! this ſame is intitled, an excellent new ballad, in praiſe of the *Country-Wake*.

Sir *Tho.* Hark! we ſhall have a merry ballad.

Flora. Bleſs my eyes!—is not that he, Betty?

Betty. The very he, madam—but huſh.

Song by Friendly.

I.

I'LL ſing you a ditty, and warrant it true,
Give but attention unto me awhile,
Of tranſactions at court, and in country too;
Toilſome pleaſures, and pleaſing toil.
Accept it (I pray) as your help-mates you take,
To ſome 'twill give joy,
And ſome others annoy,
All's fair at a Country-Wake, All's fair, &c.

II.

'At courts we ſee patriots noble and juſt,
'Fit for employments of honour and power;
'But then there are ſycophants, unfit for truſt,
'Blend with the great, and in number are more;
'Slaves, who would honour and honeſty ſtake,
'With ſordid intention
'To get place or penſion;
'Strange news at a Country-Wake, Strange news, &c.

III.

Some ladies at court are ſtil'd unpolite,
Becauſe truly virtuous, and prone to no ill;
Whilſt others who ſparkle in diamonds bright,
Are ſtript of their pride at baſſet or quadrille,
'Till their loſſes at play do their lords credit ſhake;
Then their toys to recover,
They'll grant the laſt favour;
Strange news at a Country-Wake, Strange news, &c.

IV.

Here moſt of our gentlemen patriots are,
Tho' very bad ſtateſmen, I freely confeſs;
They deſign harm to none—but a Fox or a Hare,
And are always found loyal in war and in peace.
The farmer's induſtry does earth fertile make;
The huſbandman's plowing,
His planting and ſowing,
Gets health and good cheer at a Country-Wake. Gets, &c.

V.

Our girls blooming fair, without waſhes or paints,
From neighbouring villages hither reſort;
They kiſs ſweet as roſes, yet virtuous as ſaints,
(Who can ſay more for the ladies at court)
No worldly cares vex 'em aſleep or awake,
But their time they improve
In peace and true love,
And innocent mirth, at the Country-Wake. And &c.

VI.

The ſchemes of a courtier are full of intrigue;
Here's all fair and open, dark deeds we deſpiſe:
Set rural contentment 'gainſt courtly fatigue,
Who chooſes the former is happy and wiſe.
Now let's pray for the King, and for England's ſake,
From all faction free
May his ſubjects agree,
As well at the court as the Country-Wake. As, &c.

Do you think ſhe knew me!

Serv. Knew you, Sir! why I bought one of your ballads for her, and ſhe tipt the wink upon me, with as much as to ſay, deſire him not to go till he hears from me.—Suppoſe, Sir, you took a cup of nappy here, to paſs away the time a little.

Friend. Call for what you have a mind to.

Serv. Here, houſe!——

Enter Hob.

Hob. Ch'am coming, Ch'am coming. Your zarvant, maiſter Friendly, I'm glad to zee you, you're welcome to the vair.

Friend. I thank you, honeſt Hob.

Hob. I ſhau'd knaw that gentlemon——maiſter Richard, I think.

Serv. Ay, Hob, how do'ſt do?

Hob. O Laird, Maiſter, how d'ye do? Come, pray zit down.—maiſter Friendly—Come, pray ſtay, and drink one pot avore you go.

Friend. Sit down, or this fellow's impertinence will make us obſerv'd. What do'ſt thou do with an apron on, Hob?

Hob. Adod, I put'n on but juſt now; vather will do as neighbours do, and every one i'th town almoſt zells ale on vair day—But now we zells every other zorts of liquors, and wine too, an occaſion be.

Friend. Wine!

Hob. Ay, all zorts of wine.

Friend. Say'ſt thou ſo? bring us ſome claret then.

Hob. Claret, Zir! We have no claret, we mun not zell claret, 'tis againſt th' law—Now you may ha' ſome o' your port, your red port now, or your white port, or ſuch zort of ſtuff.

Friend. Such ſtuff as thou haſt then, prithee bring us.

Hob. Yes, Zir—Ch'am coming—Now in my mind, Zir, what do you think of a little zack; a little zack now, and zome o' your zugar in't, is main good.

Friend. Prithee bring what thou likeſt beſt thyſelf, for I'm ſure 'twill pleaſe no palate but thy own.

[*Exit* Hob.

Serv. Sir, with humble ſubmiſſion, I don't yet diſcover any great hopes from this ſame project of yours, Pray, Sir, how do you propoſe to come at the lady?

Friend. While the garden door's ſhut, and that old dragon is ſo watchful of the fruit, there are but little hopes indeed. However, I won't quit the place; fortune may yet do ſomething unexpectedly to befriend me.

Enter Hob, *with pots, tobacco, bread, cheeſe and ſugar.*

Hob. Ch'am coming, ch'am coming.—Here, Zir.—

Friend. Where's the ſack, Hob?

Hob. Zack, Zir! Odd I dan't knaw, I thought you zaid you had rather have ale.—Ale is indeed much wholeſomer for your Engliſh ſtomachs—For my part, I'd rather have ale now. Maiſter Richard, but a bit avore you drink; come, and in the mean time I'll put a little zugar in the ale, and make it as good as I con for you. Come, Zir, againſt you're diſpos'd.

Friend. Thank you, Hob—This fellow's kindneſs will poiſon me.

Serv. Not at his rate of taſting, Sir, for he has not left a drop at the bottom. [*Aſide.*

Hob. Adod, 'tis main good, Zir.—Will you have t'other pot, Zir?

Friend. No; prithee drink this too, and then fetch us a couple.

Hob. Yes, Zir, I will.—Ch'am coming—*Exit* Hob.

Sir *Tho.* Come, my merry countrymen, every man take his laſs, and give us a dance or two, and then we'll have the cudgels out.

Count. Yes, an't like your worſhip, we are all ready. Come, ſcratch, ſtrike up. [*Dance.*

Enter Hob.

Hob. Ay, marry, Zir, well done, Ralph, zet to un Joan, zet to un.——

Wife within.] Hob! Hob!

Hob. Ch'am coming, ch'am coming,—*Toll loll.*

O. Hob within.] Hob! Hob!

Hob. Ch'am coming, ch'am coming.——What a plague ails vathet, trow? An old vool!—Udſblead, he makes more a noiſe—Set to now, William—Ah, rarely done! In Mary, ah, dainty Mary! Turn her about, John—Now, now! a murrain!—You're quite out.—Look, Ralph ſhould ha' caſt off, and while John had turn'd Mary about, Tomas ſhou'd ha' led up Nan, and Joan met Ralph at bottom agen; mean while, John ſhou'd have ſided with Mary, and then Mary ſhou'd

back to back with Ralph, and then Tomas had come in again, in his own place, and ſo all had been right.—Come, begin again.—Strike up, ſcratch, tol lol.

O. *Hob* within] Hob! Hob! Where be ye?

Hob. Ch'am coming, ch'am coming: what a devil can't you be quiet a bit—Tol, lol.

Enter Old Hob.

O Hob. Hey-day! Hey-day! This is rare ſport. Uddſblead, I'll ſtrap you, you baſe rawg ye—Muſt you be dauncing here, and your mother and I at work?

[*Strikes him.*

Hob. Hey-day, what's the matter now? What, muſt I be beat all days o' my life?

O. *Hob.* You graceleſs rawg, mind your buſineſs then, do; yonder's your poor mother within, a ſcawring, and ſcawring 'till ſhe ſweats again, and nobody to draw one drop of beer.

Hob. I don't care a varthing—I won't draw a drop more, if you go to that; do your worſt, and take your courſe.

O. *Hob.* Sirrah, come in, and dan't ſtand dauncing here, dan't ye.

Hob. I won't go in, zo I won't, if that trouble ye, I will daunce, and daunce agen. Tol, lol, lol——

[*Throws the drink in his face.*

O. *Hob.* Ah! thou'rt an untoward boy as e'er was born. Marey forgive me for begetting thee.

[*Exit O.* Hob.

Hob. (*to Friendly*) did not I give him a fine dowſing?

Friend. Ay, ay, you are a hopeful lad.

Hob. Marry come up, what's here to do, I trow?

Count. Here's the cudgels, an't like you; will your worſhip pleaſe to have us begin?

Sir *Tho.* Ay, ay, by all means; make haſte, Roger, and bring forth the hat and favour.

Roger. Here 'tis, an't pleaſe you.

Sir *Tho.* Hang it up there, and he that wins it, let him wear it—The firſt Somerſetſhire man that breaks a head, here's half a crown for him to drink; and he that breaks that rogue Hob's head, ſhall have another.

Hob.

Hob. Shall he? Look ye, he that breaks my head ſhall ha' zomewhat to do, I'll tell you that—Let'n be who he wull, he ſhall earn his money; ecod I'll rib'n; and look ye, to begin, here I'll take up the cudgel—and now let the beſt man here take up the t'other a'n he dare——If he be a Zomerzetſhire man, let'n be a Zomerzetſhire man.——I fight for Glouceſterſhire, I don't care who knaws it.

Sir *Tho.* At him, at him there! what is there nobody dare venture upon him? Neighbour Puzzlepate, take up t'other cudgel.

Puz. Not I, an't pleaſe you, I have enough of 'en already; he broke my head but laſt week.

Sir *Tho.* Roger—Sirrah, do you take up t'other cudgel, and thraſh him, d'ye hear, thraſh him ſoundly, ſirrah.

Rog. I can't promiſe that, Sir; I'll do my beſt, I'll break his head if I can, in love; and if he breaks mine, much good may do him.

Friend. So! if Hob does but get the better of the combat, the teſty knight will certainly be provok'd to come down, and then we ſhall have ſport—Dick, help to encourage him.

Serv. Well ſaid, Hob! O brave Hob! now for Glouceſterſhire, Hob!

Hob. I warrant ye, maiſter, let me alone.

Friend. Here, Hob, there's an angel for thee, and if thou break'ſt his head, I'll give thee another.

Hob. Don't ye vear, maiſtar, ecod I'll noint 'en.

Rog. Do if thou canſt——I don't fear thee, Hob.

Hob. S'blead, I'll dreſs thy jacket, I'll dowſe thy Zomerzetſhire coat for thee.

Rog. Will you? Come on.

Serv. O brave, Hob!

All. O brave, Roger!—Huzza!

[Hob *breaks his head, takes down the hat and favour, puts it on, and ſtruts about.*

Hob. Ecod I have don't, I've don't efaith.

Sir *Tho.* Foul, foul, foul.

Hob. Fair, fair, fair.

Sir

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Hob. Ecod I have don't, I've don't efaith.

Sir *Tho.* Foul, foul, foul.

Hob. Fair, fair, fair.

Sir

Sir *Tho.* You lie, you dog, 'twas foul.

All. Huzza.

Friend. Stand upon your guard, Hob, the knight's coming down.

Hob. Is he? Let'n come and welcome, here I'll ſtand: I'll take no other than St. George's guard. If he lets drive at me, voregad, I'll hit'n o'er the ſconce, an he were a knight of gold.

Sir *Tho.* Where are theſe bumkins? Now, who ſays 'tis fair? I ſay 'tis foul.

Hob. I ſay 'tis fair.

[*Sir* Thomas *endeavouring to come at* Hob, *is held by the country people.*

Hob. A' zword. [*Exit running.*

Friend. to Flo. Now, now, dear creature, if ever you would redeem yourſelf or me from eternal bondage, be kind, and fly into the arms of liberty.

Flo. What wou'd you have me do?

Friend. Madam, your uncle has left the garden door open; there's no mortal now to oppoſe your flight—Scour, ——Scout, you dog, and ſee that the enemy don't rally upon us.

Serv. Ay, ay, Sir. [*Exit* Servant.

Flo. Ah, but conſider, if my uncle ſhould ſurpriſe me.

Bet. Conſider, the door's open, madam.

Friend. Nothing but delay can ruin us.

Flo. O dear, I'm in a thouſand frights!

Bet. This is downright provoking! Sir, ſince you ſee there's no hopes of my lady, if you can ſettle the leaſt tip of your heart upon your humble ſervant, I'll be over the wall in a twinkling.

Flo. Hold, hold, rather than you ſhould break your neck, I will venture——Well, here I am, I tremble every joint of me; now whither will you carry me?

[*They come down.*

Friend. To a doctor that ſhall cure thee of all fears for ever—To the parſon, the parſon, my dear angel.

Flo. O Lurd, but if he ſhould not be at home now!

Bet. What ſhould we do for ſomething to be afraid of?

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Sir Thomas.

Sir *Tho.* There, you ruſtick rogues, you hard-headed

dogs, I think I've at laſt met with your ſculls——I believe I have notch'd ſome of your noddles for you. ——Hey-day! the garden-door open, and my niece gone!—my mind miſgives me conſumedly—Niece! Betty! Thieves! Robbery! Murder! Loſt! Not to be found!

Enter Friendly's *Servant.*

Serv. So, here he is, and I muſt bam him 'till the buſineſs is over.

Sir *Tho.* Thieves! thieves!

Serv. Pray, Sir, what's the matter?

Sir *Tho.* Oons, Sir, let me go, or I'll run my ſword into your guts.

Serv. Sir, I'm afraid your brain's ſomething out of order, and therefore 'twill be but a friendly part in me to take care of you.

Sir *Tho.* Blood and thunder! you dog, get out of my way, or I'll—

Serv. Nay, then— [*Preſenting a piſtol.*

Come, Sir, make your thruſt——

Sir *Tho.* What the devil are you?

Serv. A philoſopher; and this ſmall pop is my argument.

Sir *Tho.* Oons, Sir, I believe you're a highwayman, and your pop, there, is your livelihood.

Serv. Sir, you may be as ſcurrilous as you pleaſe, provided you don't paſs this way.

Sir *Tho.* S'death, Sir, what buſineſs have you to hinder me?

Serv. Sir, I have no buſineſs at preſent, but to hinder you.

Sir *Tho.* But pray, Sir, how comes it to be your buſineſs? [ſineſs?

Serv. Becauſe, Sir, 'tis my buſineſs to do my maſter's buſineſs; and I have ſome modeſt reaſon to believe, that he and the parſon are now doing your niece's buſineſs.

Sir *Tho.* The devil! murder! where are they, villain?

Serv. Pray, Sir, compoſe yourſelf, for they are here.

Enter Friendly, Flora, *and* Betty.

Friend. Your bleſſing, Sir?

Serv. Does not that ſhew a ſweet temper in him now,

now, to ask it of you, that are but his bare uncle?

Sir Tho. I am ſtruck all of a heap, and dumb.

Serv. Come, Sir, don't be as obſtinate as an old covetous father at the end of a comedy; conſider, the main action's over, you had as good be reconcil'd.

Sir *Tho.* Ooons, Sir, I can't be reconcil'd. [*Exit Sir Tho.*

Serv. Go thy ways, like a croſs grain'd old fool.

Friend. Let him perſiſt in his obſtinacy, it can be no bar to our happineſs. You look melancholy, my love.

Flora. I think I've reaſon—You promis'd to carry me to a doctor, that ſhould cure me of my fears. But, on the contrary, I find that the malady increaſes, and is nothing more than the dread of your inconſtancy. I have for ever loſt my uncle's favour, and have now no friend but you—— Shou'd you hereafter eſtrange your heart from me, I am wretched indeed——Reflect on what I've ſaid, excuſe my ſuſpicions, and remember there is no return of ſeaſons in love.

Friend. You ſhall never have cauſe to mention thoſe fears again.——

Flo. It is eaſy to talk thus now, but the difficulty will be to ſpeak theſe ſentiments with truth, a year hence: However, as I have run all hazards for you, honour will oblige you to conceal your inconſtancy from me—ſhou'd you be guilty of it.

Flora. *Let me not diſcover,*
In thee a faithleſs lover.
Friend. *I'll never prove a rover,*
But true as a turtle to thee, my dear.
Flora. *Love prompts me to believe thee,*
Do not then deceive me.
Friend. *My conduct ne'er ſhall grieve thee,*
Let this ſuffice; my heart's ſincere.
Flora. ——*Let our lives be ſpent*——
Friend. ——*In merriment;*
Flora. ——*With the ſweet cement*——
Friend. ——*Of ſoft content.*
Flora. ——*May our joys augment*——
Friend. —*May no dire event*——
Both. ——————*diſturb our mutual pleaſure.*